

VIA FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION:
703-872-9306

Tyco 18005 (AT 20958-38)
PATENT

Remarks

The Office Action dated June 24, 2005, and made final, has been carefully reviewed and the foregoing amendment has been made in consequence thereof.

Initially, applicants respectfully traverse the finality of the Outstanding Office Action. Previously, a final rejection was mailed April 25, 2005. A request for reconsideration was submitted June 15, 2005. In response to the request for reconsideration, the finality of the April 25 Office Action was withdrawn and prosecution was reopened. It is respectfully submitted that it is improper to make final the Outstanding Office Action, given that the finality of the April 25 Office Action was withdrawn and prosecution was reopened. It is further noted that the grounds of rejections in the Outstanding Office Action are based upon Art of Record. Therefore, presumably the present grounds of rejection should have been made in the prior Office Actions. It is now improper to make the Outstanding Office Action Final, which would then presumably provide the opportunity to deny entry of any claim amendments made in response to the new grounds of rejections provided in the Outstanding Office Action.

Claims 1-19 are pending in this application, of which claims 1, 7, 8, 10, 16, and 17 have been amended. It is respectfully submitted that the pending claims recite allowable subject matter.

The rejection of Claims 1-19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being anticipated by Okayasu et al. (U.S. Patent 6,364,692) in view of Fukuda (U.S. Patent 6,783,381) is respectfully traversed.

Okayasu et al. describe a connector including a female housing (10) and a male housing (20). A seal (30) is located on the front surface of the female housing and is held in place by a seal holder (40). The male housing includes a main body (21) and a receptacle (22) extending from the mating surface of the main body. A plurality of L-shaped contact tabs (23) extend into the receptacle. The female housing includes an accommodating portion (11) that has a plurality of contact cavities (13). A receptacle cover (12) surrounds the accommodating portion. A

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rubber ring (19) extends over a circumference of the accommodating portion to provide sealing between the male and female housings. The seal holder holds the seal against the front end of the accommodating portion. The contact tabs penetrate the seal when the male and female housings are joined. The seal consists of a gelatinous or elastic material.

Fukuda describes a water-proof connector (1) including a tubular female connector housing (2), a male connector housing (3), and a locking member (4). The male housing includes a body (15), and a cover (23). A packing (39) on the body serves as a sealing member. The body includes a plurality of terminal chambers (17) that accommodate a plurality of terminal fittings (40b). The inner housing has peripheral walls (24) that define an opening (18) that receives the female housing. The cover includes a plurality of protrusions (53) that extend from a wall (50). An end (39a) of the packing is positioned between the wall and the protrusions. A locking arm (16) is arranged inside the cover and arranged between a recess (19) and the body.

Claim 1 recites a connector, including "a housing ... said housing comprising an outer shell and an inner shell disposed within said outer shell; wherein said inner shell includes ... and a shoulder on an outer perimeter thereof, said inner shell further including a channel on an outer perimeter thereof between said shoulder and said wire receiving end, said channel receiving a seal; a contact held in said housing proximate said mating face; a gel material provided on said housing between said contact and said mating face, ... and a terminal position assurance (TPA) member mounted over said contact and said gel material, said TPA member engaging said shoulder".

It is respectfully submitted that neither Okayasu et al. nor Fukuda, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest the apparatus recited in claim 1. Specifically, neither Okayasu et al. nor Fukuda, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a TPA member that engages a shoulder on the inner shell. Rather, Okayasu et al. describe a connector wherein the inner shell does not include a shoulder formed thereon, and Fukuda describes a locking arm inside an outer shell or cover.

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Accordingly, claim 1 is submitted to be patentable over Okayasu et al. in view of Fukuda.

Claims 2-9 depend from independent claim 1. When the recitations of claims 2-9 are considered in combination with the recitations of claim 1, Applicant submits that dependent claims 2-9 likewise are patentable over Okayasu et al. in view of Fukuda.

Claim 10 recites connector assembly including "a plug ... said receptacle having a gel material provided on said receptacle over a face of said receptacle, ... wherein said receptacle includes a shoulder between said mating end and said wire receiving end, said receptacle further including a channel thereon between said shoulder and said wire receiving end, said channel receiving a seal; and a terminal position assurance (TPA) member mounted over said contact and said gel material, said TPA member engaging said shoulder".

It is respectfully submitted that neither Okayasu et al. nor Fukuda, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest the apparatus recited in claim 1. Specifically, neither Okayasu et al. nor Fukuda, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a TPA member that engages a shoulder on the inner shell. Rather, Okayasu et al. describe a connector wherein the inner shell does not include a shoulder formed thereon, and Fukuda describes a locking arm inside an outer shell or cover.

Accordingly, claim 10 is submitted to be patentable over Okayasu et al. in view of Fukuda.

Claims 11-19 depend from independent claim 10. When the recitations of claims 11-19 are considered in combination with the recitations of claim 10, Applicant submits that dependent claims 11-19 likewise are patentable over Okayasu et al. in view of Fukuda.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicant respectfully requests that the Section 103 rejection of Claims 1-19 be withdrawn.

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In view of the foregoing remarks, all the claims now active in this application are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,



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